



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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Day Staff vs. SPRU Coverage 3-5-2012

The immediate needs of the child and client family must take precedence over any day/after-hours jurisdictional conflict.

All situations which come to the attention of Local Office or IAIU staff prior to close of the business day are the responsibility of day staff to address/investigate and stabilize in accordance with established policies and procedures.

Day staff are eligible for overtime compensation for work performed after the close of the business day per Civil Service Commission guidelines. Day staff call SCR with Special Instructions, if a crisis is anticipated in an active case and after-hours intervention may be required. When possible, the assigned Worker, upon giving the Special Instructions, indicates that he or she is to be called by SCR, to personally handle the emergency (in accordance with an established case plan), instead of diverting the situation to the on-call SPRU Worker.

When a Supervisor/office Manager or Administrator is needed by day staff after hours (e.g., a Worker out on a case beyond the close of the work day needs to conference a case), day staff contacts the day Supervisor/Administrator. If the need for supervisory consultation from the field is anticipated in advance, the Worker and Supervisor establish a viable means of communicating with each other after the close of the office.

If SCR is called by a day Worker who needs support or supervision, the Screener helps to facilitate contact between the Worker and day supervisory/administrative staff. SCR contacts the SPRU Supervisor to handle day case situations only as a last resort, when no other local Supervisor/Administrator is available. Situations which come to the attention of CP&P after the close of the business day/during non-business hours are the responsibility of the DCF After-Hours Response System. Situations handled by SPRU are triggered by assignments from SCR.

Day staff are not permitted to make appointments or schedule field visits for SPRU staff during non-business hours. Any exception to this policy must be approved by the Local Office Manager in advance, and documented in writing.

If a matter was assigned to the LO or IAIU Regional Office prior to its closing, and an immediate response was not warranted based on information derived, but later new facts are learned and/or the situation deteriorates or escalates, requiring a CP&P or IAIU response, SPRU intervention may be appropriate. SCR or SPRU seeks input from the assigned Worker or Investigator (day staff), and/or his or her Supervisor.

When a SPRU Worker has a conflict/disagreement with, and/or a question of judgment about the handling of a case by day staff, the SPRU Supervisor or on-call IAIU Supervisor is contacted for direction and resolution. The SPRU Supervisor or IAIU Supervisor may contact day staff or LO/IAIU administration after hours to discuss a case handling issue, if necessary, to assure the safety of a child. If such a situation requires additional follow up, the SPRU Supervisor or IAIU Supervisor advises the local SPRU Coordinator or the LO Manager or IAIU Regional Supervisor the next business day.

If a CP&P or IAIU day staff member is contacted by SCR or SPRU for case consultation after hours, he or she may be entitled to overtime compensation in accordance with Civil Service Commission guidelines.

Local Office Closings 7-5-2011

Whenever a State of Emergency is declared by the Governor and State offices are ordered closed, DCF executes weather emergency operations. When DCF Offices are closed for any other reason, no matter the actual hour of the day, the CP&P Director or designee (for SPRU) and the Director of IAIU may authorize utilization of the SPRU coverage system already scheduled for the close of business that day.

Skeleton Crew Situations 7-5-2011

When a Local Office or IAIU experience a staff reduction due to a local emergency, evacuation, or weather condition, and coverage is by "skeleton crew," the individual(s) scheduled for SPRU duty that night should not be assigned office coverage, to assure his or her availability to the Department's After-Hours Response System at the official close of the business day.

In such a situation, the Local Office or IAIU Regional Office is not officially closed. SPRU payment may not be authorized or issued as compensation for work performed prior to the close of the business day.

Determining Who Is On-Call when State Offices Are Closed 7-5-2011

In times of emergency closure of State government offices, the following guidelines apply in determining who will serve on-call for SPRU:

CIRCUMSTANCES	WHO SERVES ON CALL
Early dismissal. CP&P offices closed after the work day has begun.	Early activation of SPRU staff scheduled on duty that night at 5 p.m.
Delayed opening of CP&P field offices (field offices opened at a specified hour past the usual start of business at 9 a.m.).	Staff on-call the previous night (1:00 a.m. to 8:59 a.m. shift) continue to serve on-call until the CP&P field offices open for business.
Full day closing of CP&P offices, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (due to weather emergency, etc.).	The 9 a.m. to 4:59 p.m. "day" shift is covered by SPRU staff scheduled to be on-call that night at 5 p.m.

If a designated SPRU staff member cannot serve within these parameters, he or she is responsible for making alternative arrangements for coverage, assisted by the SPRU Coordinator, as necessary.

In times of severe, high risk weather conditions, special arrangements for response may become necessary. Example: Seek assistance/transportation from the local police or other municipal or county emergency response services, to avoid undue risk to staff safety and well-being by attempting a response in a snow storm upon operating a standard equipped State vehicle.

SPRU Workers are encouraged to conference each assigned SPRU case with the SPRU Supervisor before commencing a field response, to determine whether a field response is warranted to assure the safety of the child, what alternative action can be initiated, to assure both the safety of the child as well as the safety of the responding SPRU Worker; etc. Can a field response wait? Can a carefully placed telephone call provide relief and assurances? Can another agency respond to help a child or family in crisis?

The SPRU Supervisor has the authority to activate additional SPRU Workers, or "teams" of SPRU Workers, if the current situation warrants special arrangements/additional coverage